

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1 1. A method comprising:
2 receiving, in a computer system, a set of alternative choices;
3 receiving, in the computer system, a set of criteria by which the set of
4 alternative choices may be evaluated;
5 receiving, in the computer system via a data network coupled to the
6 computer system, a set of weights sent to the computer system by a first set of individuals
7 via the data network, each weight indicating importance of a corresponding criterion from
8 the set of criteria;
9 receiving, in the computer system via the data network, a set of evaluations
10 sent to the computer system by a second set of individuals, each evaluation corresponding
11 to possible attributes of a corresponding criterion; and
12 based on the set of evaluations and the set of weights, providing a relative
13 analysis of the alternative choices.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the relative analysis of the alternative
2 choices comprises ranking the alternatives based on a score derived from a weighted
3 combination of the evaluations, the weighted combination of the evaluations being based
4 on the weights.

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1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluations comprise pairwise
2 comparison.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluations comprise direct entry.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the evaluations comprise multiple choice.

1 6. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving, via the data network, comprises
2 receiving, in a server application, a datastream, in XML protocol, from the respective
3 individual, the datastream being entered in a world wide web client application.

1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the computer system comprises a multi-
2 processor computer.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein some, but not all, weights in the set of
2 weights are received after receipt of at least some of the evaluations in the set of
3 evaluations.

1 9. The method of claim 1, wherein some, but not all, evaluations in the set of
2 evaluations are received after receipt of at least some of the weights in the set of weights.

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1 10. The method of claim 1, wherein the set of criteria is sent to the computer
2 system by a third set of individuals via the data network.

1 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the set of alternatives is sent to the
2 computer system by a fourth set of individuals via the data network.

1 12. The method of claim 1, wherein one or more individuals of the first set of
2 individuals is a member of the second set of individuals.

1 13. The method of claim 1, wherein no individual is a member of both the first
2 and second sets of individuals.

1 14. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the individuals in the first set of
2 individuals provides a weight for each of the criteria.

1 15. The method of claim 1, wherein one or more individuals in the first set of
2 individuals provides weights for fewer than all the criteria in the set of criteria.

1 16. The method of claim 1, wherein one or more individuals in the second set
2 of individuals provides evaluations for fewer than all the criteria in the set of criteria.

1 17. The method of claim 1, wherein each of the individuals in the second set of
2 individuals provides an evaluation for each of the criteria.

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1 18. The method of claim 1, wherein the method of claim 1 further comprises
2 requiring a security identification of individuals in the first and second sets of individuals
3 before accepting their respective inputs.

1 19. The method of claim 18, wherein the security identification comprises a
2 password.

1 20. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
2 receiving in the computer system an additional set of weights sent to the
3 computer system by a fifth set of individuals via the data network, the fifth set of
4 individuals not including the first set of individuals, each weight indicating importance of
5 a corresponding criterion from the set of criteria;

6 receiving, in the computer system via the data network, an additional set of
7 evaluations sent to the computer system by a sixth set of individuals, each evaluation
8 corresponding to possible attributes of a corresponding criterion; and

9 based on the set of evaluations, the additional set of evaluations, the set of
10 weights and the additional set of weights, providing an additional relative analysis of the
11 alternative choices

1 21. A system for distributed decision processing comprising:
2 a server coupled to a data network, the server receiving a set of alternative
3 choices and a set of criteria by which the set of alternative choices may be evaluated;

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4 a first set of client devices coupled to the data network, the first set of client
5 devices transmitting to the server via the data network a set of weights provided by a first
6 set of individuals, each weight indicating importance of a corresponding criterion from the
7 set of criteria;

8 a second set of client devices coupled to the data network, the second set of
9 client devices transmitting to the server via the data network a set of evaluations provided
10 by a second set of individuals, each evaluation corresponding to possible attributes of a
11 corresponding criteria;

12 wherein the server provides a relative analysis of the alternative choices
13 based on the set of evaluations and the set of weights.

1 22. The system of claim 21, wherein the relative analysis of the alternative
2 choices comprises ranking the alternatives based on a score derived from a weighted
3 combination of the evaluations, the weighted combination of the evaluations being based
4 on the weights.

1 23. The system of claim 21, wherein receiving, via the data network, comprises
2 receiving, in the server, a datastream, in XML protocol, from the respective individual, the
3 datastream being entered in a world wide web client application on the respective client
4 device.

24. The system of claim 21, including requiring a security identification of individuals in the first and second sets of individuals before accepting their respective inputs.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein the security identification comprises a password.

26. A system for distributed decision processing comprising:

data processing means, coupled to a data network, the data processing means for receiving a set of alternative choices and a set of criteria by which the set of alternative choices may be evaluated;

a first set of interface means, coupled to the data network, the first set of interface means for transmitting to the data processing means via the data network a set of weights provided by a first set of individuals, each weight indicating importance of a corresponding criterion from the set of criteria;

a second set of interface means coupled to the data network, the second set of interface means for transmitting to the data processing means via the data network a set of evaluations provided by a second set of individuals, each evaluation corresponding to possible attributes of a corresponding criteria;

means, coupled to the data processing means, for providing a relative analysis of the alternative choices based on the set of evaluations and the set of weights.